

Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 9 December 1993

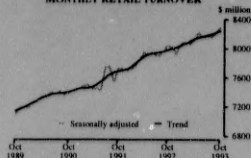
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statistics

MONTHLY RETAIL TURNOVER



Retail trade up but still weak

The trend estimates of retail turnover for October 1993 indicate a slight strengthening in the growth rate. Over the last six months the trend estimates have increased by either 0.2 or 0.3 per cent per month at current prices. The annual growth rate (October 1993 over October 1992) was 3.3 per cent.

During the three months ended October, the grocery industry has recorded growth of around 0.5 per cent per month. Other food stores continue to show strong growth although there has been a weakening in this growth rate in recent months. The strong growth in the hotels, liquor stores and licensed clubs industry evident in the early part of 1993 has not been sustained, with growth being weak over recent months. Department stores have shown growth in the last two months after a short period in decline, while clothing and fabric stores are in decline.

RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER

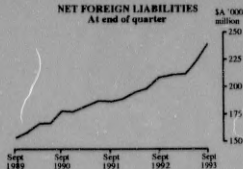
	Original value in October 1993 (\$ million)	Average monthly percentage change in trend estimates	
		3 months ended October 1993	12 months ended October 1993
Grocers, confectioners, tobacconists	2 520	0.5	0.4
Butchers	200	-0.8	-0.1
Other food stores	534	0.8	-0.2
Total food group	3 254	0.4	0.3
Hotels, liquor stores, licensed clubs	1 050	0.3	0.6
Department and general stores	878	0.2	0.1
Clothing and fabrics stores	537	-0.1	-0.2
Electrical stores	459	1.2	0.8
Pharmacies	423	1.2	1.5
Newsagents	244	-0.5	-0.8
Other industries	1 521	n.a.	n.a.
All industries	8 367	0.2	0.3

States which recorded strong growth were Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory have recorded moderate growth. Western Australia also recorded moderate growth but the rate has eased over the last five months. Victoria has shown zero growth in both September and October.

RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER
Monthly percentage change in State/Territory trend estimates

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	ACT	Aust.
1993								
June	-0.3	0.4	0.2	0.7	1.2	0.1	0.0	0.2
July	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.1	0.2
August	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.2	0.2
September	0.5	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.3
October	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.2

NET FOREIGN LIABILITIES
At end of quarter



Net foreign liabilities up 6.6 per cent

Net foreign liabilities of Australian residents at 30 September 1993 totalled \$239 057 million. This was an increase of \$14 875 million, or 6.6 per cent, on the position at the end of the June quarter 1993.

The increase was made up of: net capital transactions (the balance on capital account in the balance of payments) which recorded an inflow of \$3 411 million during the quarter; exchange rate variations of \$1 130 million; and other changes of \$10 333 million in the value of net foreign liabilities.

The main cause of the increase was a higher level of foreign investment in Australia (up \$23 000 million) due to an increase in the level of equity holdings by non-residents in enterprises in Australia, up \$13 892 million (or 11.6%) compounded by increased foreign borrowing, up \$8 715 million (or 4.1%). These changes were partly offset by a 7.2 per cent rise in Australian investment abroad (see below).

Of the total international investment position at 30 September, net foreign debt accounted for \$177 805 million (up 3.5%), net equity liabilities for \$61 148 million (up 15.8%) and net other investment for \$104 million.

Net investment income payable abroad in the September quarter was \$2 811 million, down 12.3 per cent on the amount payable in the June quarter.

AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT POSITION
(\$A '000 million)

	Level at end of	
	June 1993	September 1993
Foreign investment in Australia		
Borrowing from abroad	210.3	219.9
Equity and other investment	126.8	141.1
Total	337.1	360.1
Australian investment abroad	112.9	121.0
Net international investment position		
Net foreign debt	171.7	177.8
Net equity and other liabilities	52.5	61.3
Total	224.2	239.1

Particular features of the September quarter result for foreign investment in Australia were:

- ☐ an increase in holdings of Australian equities by non-residents of \$13 892 million, principally the result of capital transactions of \$2 916 million, (especially portfolio corporate equities of \$2 501 million), and other changes of \$10 943 million, (largely the result of market valuation changes).

- an increase in the level of borrowing from non-residents of \$8 715 million, comprising increases in the official sector borrowing of \$3 163 million, in the portfolio and other private and public non-official sectors of \$3 876 million and in the direct borrowings of \$1 677 million.

Australian investment abroad recorded a significant increase of \$8 125 million following an increase of \$6 459 million in the level for the June quarter 1993. The notable features of Australian investment abroad in the September quarter were: a net increase of \$5 532 million in equity investment abroad during the quarter; and a net increase of \$1 198 million in reserve assets and \$1 434 million in lending.

For further information, order the publication *International Investment Position, Australia* (5306.0) or contact Michael Atkinson on (06) 252 6252.

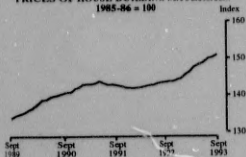
Building materials prices rise

Prices of materials used in house building rose 0.5 per cent, while prices of materials used in other forms of building increased by 0.3 per cent in September. These increases reflect, in part, higher sales tax rates for a range of building materials.

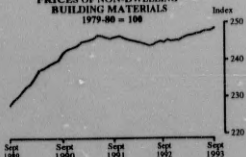
The main contributors to the overall price movement in house building materials in September were hot water services (3.2%), stoves (3.1%) and timber (0.8%). For materials used in other forms of building, the main price movements were for elevators and escalators (1.9%), clay bricks (1.2%) and air conditioning equipment (0.6%) over the same period.

On an annual basis, prices of materials used in house building increased by 5.2 per cent from September 1992 to September 1993. Prices of materials used in other forms of building increased by 1.6 per cent.

PRICES OF HOUSE BUILDING MATERIALS
1985-86 = 100



PRICES OF NON-DWELLING
BUILDING MATERIALS
1979-80 = 100

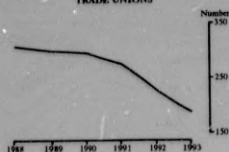


PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, SEPTEMBER 1993
Percentage change

City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	0.1	4.3	0.2	0.0
Melbourne	0.5	6.6	0.4	2.8
Brisbane	0.8	3.5	0.2	1.9
Adelaide	1.6	10.9	0.3	3.0
Perth	0.0	1.9	0.4	1.5
Hobart	0.0	2.0	0.2	2.4
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.5	5.2	0.3	1.6
Darwin	— Not available —		0.8	2.2
Canberra	0.0	4.8	0.1	1.0

For further information, order the publications *Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra* (6408.0) and *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities* (6407.0), or contact Mark Dickson (06) 252 6198.

TRADE UNIONS



Union mergers continue

In June 1993 there were 188 trade unions in Australia, 39 fewer than in June 1992. Reported membership of trade unions declined from 3 135 100 in 1992 to 3 000 100 in 1993.

The reduction in the number of unions was most marked in those unions registered under the *Federal Industrial Relations Act 1988*. The total number of federally-registered unions as at June 1993 was 66, down from 94 the previous year.

During the period 1988 to 1993 the number of trade unions continued to decline. Between 1988 and 1990 the decline was fairly small (the number of unions decreased by 13). Between 1990 and 1991 the number of unions declined by 20, from 1991 to 1992 and from 1992 and 1993 there was a reduction in the number of unions of 48 and 39 respectively.

Amalgamations were the main cause of reduction in the number of unions in 1993 with 52 unions amalgamating to form 17 unions.

At 30 June 1993, the majority of unions (122) operated in one State or Territory, yet this only accounted for 16 per cent of total union membership (488 700).

Although the number of unions with less than 1 000 members has decreased from 104 to 89 (compared with 143 unions in 1988) they still represent 47 per cent of all unions. The number of larger unions (those with 100 000 or more members) increased from 8 to 9 and now account for 46 per cent of total union membership compared with 34 per cent in 1992.

Trade union financial membership was reported at 2 715 200, a decrease of 4 per cent on 1992 figures. At 30 June 1993, 46 per cent of employees were financial members of a union compared with 47 per cent in 1992 and 50 per cent in 1991. Over the last six years the proportion of male employees who are financial members of a union has declined from 54 per cent to 50 per cent. For females, the proportion changed from 40 per cent in 1988 to 41 per cent in 1993, after peaking at 44 per cent in 1991.

TRADE UNIONS

Number of members in each union	Number of unions		Number of members ('000)	
	30 June 1992	30 June 1993	30 June 1992	30 June 1993
Under 1 000	104	89	31.4	27.2
1 000 to 3 000	35	29	61.8	50.9
3 000 to 19 999	50	37	396.3	260.1
20 000 to 79 999	23	20	932.7	915.6
80 000 to 99 999	7	4	633.7	359.0
100 000 and over	8	9	1 079.2	1 387.1
Total	227	188	3 135.1	3 000.1

ABS develops economy-wide survey of business expectations

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has published the first report of a new business expectations survey designed to be the most accurate and comprehensive in a field long regarded by analysts as an important element in the prediction of economic trends.

The new survey differs from existing private sector surveys in that it is capable of providing short and medium term (next quarter and current quarter next year) quantitative measures of expected changes in a range of key business indicators. This is in addition to the qualitative indicators produced by the existing surveys.

The ABS survey achieves its quantitative measures principally through the size and nature of its sample (some 3 000 companies of all sizes, in all industries except farming and general government) and by the weighting of the responses to reflect the size of the respondents' operation. The methodology will be further refined to improve the data while minimising the reporting burden on business.

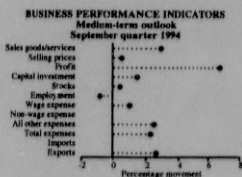
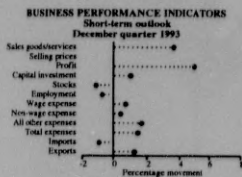
The first survey covers expectations for the December quarter 1993 and for the September quarter 1994. It is expected that when the methodology is refined, future surveys will be published before the beginning of the quarter to which short-term expectations relate.

Some features of business expectations identified in the first survey are:

- ☐ sales of goods and services are expected to rise by 3.6 per cent in the December quarter 1993 and by 2.9 per cent between the September quarter 1993 and the September quarter 1994;
- ☐ profits are expected to grow by 5 per cent in the short term and by 6.8 per cent in the medium-term, continuing the recent pattern of strong growth;
- ☐ prices are expected to rise by only 0.6 per cent in the medium term, despite expected cost increases of 2.3 per cent; and
- ☐ both investment and employment are expected to remain weak, with expectations being for medium-term growth in capital investment of 1.5 per cent and a contraction in employment of 0.9 per cent.

The survey also reveals some optimism in the business community about the balance of trade. Over the year to the September quarter 1994, no change is expected in the level of imports, while exports are expected to grow by 2.6 per cent.

Users of the first business expectations survey are advised to treat the results as experimental, and the ABS would welcome comment on those results.



Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically.

To order any of the publications mentioned in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

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- ☎ (06) 252 6627
- FAX (06) 253 1404

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- ☎ NSW (02) 268 4611
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- Qld (07) 222 6351
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Abattoir statistics

Preliminary results from a survey of abattoir operations indicate that in 1992-93, over 31 000 people were employed in producing the almost 3 million tonnes of red meat passed for human consumption. The largest component of output was beef (1.8 million tonnes) with mutton and lamb (650 thousand tonnes) and pork (340 thousand tonnes) contributing most of the balance.

The broad activity breakdown of employees in the industry is as follows.

	'000
Persons involved in slaughtering	15.3
Persons involved in boning of meat	12.3
Other staff	3.5
Total	31.1

Final results of the survey will enable presentation of detailed profiles of industry employment, inputs, outputs, costs, revenues and capitalisation. Final results are expected to be available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on request in March 1994.

For further information contact Harvey Bissett on (06) 252 5639.

Order from the following:

Expected releases over the fortnight to 21 December

- 8 Building Activity, Australia: Dwelling Unit Commencements, September Quarter 1993, Preliminary (\$750.0; \$10.70)
- 9 The Labour Force, Australia, November 1993, Preliminary (6202.0; \$10.70)
- 14 Australian National Accounts: State Accounts, September 1993 (5242.0; \$21.40)
- 16 Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, October 1993 (5609.0; \$10.70)
- 17 Export Price Index, Australia, October 1993 (6405.0; \$8.20)
Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, October 1993 (6412.0; \$10.70)
- 21 Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, October 1993 (6411.0; \$10.70)
Import Price Index, Australia, October 1993 (6414.0; \$8.20)

Selected releases: 1 to 7 December

Census of Population and Housing

1991 Census — Social Atlas — Brisbane, 6 August 1991 (2840.3; \$45.00)

Demography

Deaths, SA, 1992 (3312.4; \$14.80)

Deaths, Tas., 1992 (3312.6; \$15.00)

National accounts, Finance and Foreign trade

Foreign Trade, Aust: Merchandise Imports, October 1993 (5433.0; \$9.70)
— final issue

Manufacturing, Mining, Energy, Service industries,

Building and construction

Building Approvals, NSW, October 1993 (8731.1; \$10.70)

Manufacturing Industry, Vic., 1990-91 (8221.2; \$16.30)

Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National accounts						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	September qtr 93	\$m	n.a.	96 123	0.3	3.2
International accounts						
Balance on current account (b)	October 93	\$m	-1 184	-1 257	-17	4
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	203	158	44	98
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	20	-1	90	99
Merchandise exports	"	"	5 765	5 475	-3	8
Merchandise imports	"	"	-5 562	-5 317	-4	8.1
Net foreign debt	September qtr 93	\$m	177 805	n.a.	3.5	14.6
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	239 057	n.a.	6.6	
Consumption and investment						
Retail turnover at current prices	October 93	\$m	8 367	8 294	0.8	3.2
New capital expenditure at current prices	June qtr 93	"	6 570	6 308	-3.0	6.0
New motor vehicle registrations	October 93	no.	44 699	45 761	15.5	4.2
Production						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	September qtr 93	\$m	36 435	35 751	1.6	8.3
Dwelling unit approvals	October 93	no.	14 622	14 915	0.2	6.7
Building approvals	"	\$m	2 021	1 971	-17.5	-0.7
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	June qtr 93	"	6 023	6 044	-3.1	2.2
Prices						
Consumer price index	September qtr 93	1989-90 = 100.0	109.8	n.a.	0.5	2.2
Articles produced by manufacturing industry	September 93	1988-89 = 100.0	116.0	n.a.	0.5	1.8
Materials used in manufacturing industries	September 93	1984-85 = 100.0	128.1	n.a.	0.8	0.9
Labour force and demography						
Employed persons (d)	October 93	'000	7 828.7	7 807.0	0.4	1.3
Participation rate † (d)	"	%	62.8	63.1	0.4	0.1
Unemployment rate † (d)	"	%	10.4	11.2	0.3	0.0
Job vacancies	August qtr 93	'000	39.0	37.3	18.0	38.9
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.15	1.19	-0.5	8.3
Estimated resident population	March qtr 93	million	17.6	n.a.	0.3	1.0
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	August 93	'000	240	257	5.5	20.8
Incomes						
Company profits before income tax	September qtr 93	\$m	5 283	5 073	10.6	21.9
Av. weekly earnings, full-time adults, ordinary time	August qtr 93	\$	602.40	n.a.	0.8	2.8
Financial markets						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)	October 93	% per annum	4.80	n.a.	-1.0	-17.9
90-day bank bills †	"	"	6.50	n.a.	-5.1	-26.6
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	6.50	n.a.	1	-8
Exchange rate — \$US (c)	"	per \$A	0.6603	n.a.		

(a) based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 9 December 1993.
NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Percentage change from same period previous year

Key State indicators

	Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	March qtr 93	-0.1	4.7	-9.3	16.8	38.7	13.1	n.a.	n.a.	6.3
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	October 93	0.5	4.9	3.8	6.4	10.2	3.5	n.a.	5.6	3.3
New motor vehicle registrations†	October 93	5.6	-3.5	20.8	-8.7	1.0	-7.9	-10.1	21.6	4.2
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	October 93	-2.3	7.4	12.5	-11.0	5.3	-0.6	2.4	-2.1	6.7
Value of total building work done	June qtr 93	-5.0	-6.1	18.6	13.0	31.3	-17.3	-6.7	-11.2	2.8
Employed persons*	June qtr 93	0.9	0.7	2.5	-0.8	4.6	-1.5	0.4	3.1	1.3
Capital city consumer price index	June qtr 93	1.8	1.8	2.5	2.7	1.1	2.2	1.5	2.2	1.9
Av. weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	August qtr 93	3.0	2.1	5.2	3.6	-0.1	2.7	2.6	3.4	2.8
Population	December qtr 92	0.9	0.5	2.5	0.5	1.2	0.5	1.0	1.5	1.1
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	June qtr 93	4.6	3.6	12.2	-0.6	8.3	6.0	13.3	-7.1	6.4

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted.
Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

